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TWO CONTRASTING ATTITUDES TOWARDS EVIL

RUTH MANNING GORDON

BOSTON

The problem of evil is nearly as old as philosophy itself. At present, however, it is occupying a very prominent place in philosophic thought, perhaps because the horrors of the great war and the unsettled social conditions have brought home to us with added emphasis the evil in the world, and have upset some of our theories of the even tenor and progress of mankind.

Leaving aside the theological question as to how evil can be reconciled with a benevolent Deity, the problem is this: We find our world a mixture of good and evil. This evil appears in various forms. According to the classification used by Professor Hocking there is, first, physical evil: pain, accident, misfortune; secondly, the quasi-physical: inequality, limitation, and the result of the evil of others; thirdly, the reflective evils: cynicism, and alienation from the world; fourthly, moral evil, or sin; and finally, death — of our plans and aspirations, as well as of the body.

Now can we look forward with the hope that the good may sometime triumph and the evil be eradicated, or is evil an eternal element and an indispensable one in the constitution of the universe? As one idealist has stated it, the question is, "Whether the arduous and heroic life with the conditions, that is, the pain and the evil which evoke heroism, is worth while, enduringly and for its own sake, or whether morality is worth while only on the prospect of the final eradication of evil and therefore the abolition of morality itself."¹ These two ways of looking at

¹ R. F. A. Hoernlé, *Neo-Realism and Religion*, *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. XI, April, 1918.

evil are represented in philosophy by the two opposing views, respectively, of realism and idealism.

I

As a matter of fact, the name "*Idealism*" is misleading, since we associate that term with the possession of ideals. The theory called "idealism," however, is no more idealistic in this sense than realism — the names being more appropriate to the epistemological side of the theories than to their moral spheres. For in the realm of morality, as has been quite rightly pointed out, it is realism which is idealistic, and idealism which is realistic.²

Idealism has been, and still is, to a large extent, the dominant philosophy in the universities of America and Great Britain, and has a strong popular hold from the fact that it stands as the champion of religion, opposed to naturalism. It traces back its lineage to Kant, Fichte, and Hegel; it was transferred to Great Britain in the last century, and there represented by such men as T. H. Green, the Cairds, F. H. Bradley, and Bosanquet, and in this country by Royce.

There is a quite natural antipathy, at present, to things German, and idealism has been looked upon with disfavor because of its origin — "*Timeo Danaos . . . !*" At the same time, we ought to remember the value of idealism and its important place in the history of thought. And whatever we think of it as a theory, let us judge it on its merits alone, and not on its pedigree.

Idealism is the theory which believes the universe to be spiritual — "the actual embodiment of the highest values, as witnessed by the spiritual forms of experience." There are two forms of idealism: first, personal idealism, which means by mind the *individual* mind, and which regards God as a greater Mind; a Moral Power, but limited.

² R. F. A. Hoernlé, *Neo-Realism and Religion*, Harvard Theological Review, Vol. XI, April, 1918.

In other words, personal idealism is willing to sacrifice the omnipotence of God to His benevolence, and with its emphasis on the latter, is very near to pragmatism and realism, in the moral and religious sphere. The question in regard to personal idealism is whether this attitude is consistent with its idealism, which is a problem beyond the scope of this paper.

Secondly, there is absolute, or objective, idealism, which holds that the source of nature is one great Mind, the absolute, of which the universe is the expression. Man is the microcosm of the absolute, and through the knowledge of the individual soul the absolute reproduces itself:

“It would seem that the attainment of the knowledge [of the system of related facts] is only explicable as a reproduction of itself in the human soul by the consciousness for which the cosmos of related facts exists — a reproduction of itself, in which it uses the sentient life of the soul as its organ.”³

Man, through rational thought — when he can say, as one idealist has it, “Not I that think but the universe that thinks in me” — comes into touch with the absolute. Or again, through religious experience, the individual can be united with the absolute Spirit. From such a standpoint he can see the world as it really is — the reality instead of mere appearances. He finds that as a whole, the universe is perfect, despite, or rather, through the instrumentality of, the parts, which in their severality appear imperfect; he sees that what has seemed evil is, after all, good, or has a value, and therefore is a necessary and permanent element in the constitution of the whole.

Religion, for idealism, *transcends* morality; not in the sense that it omits it; it includes it. But it is a higher standpoint than that of “mere morality.” Through religion the idealist sees the necessity for, and the value of, morality in the world of experience.

³ T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, Book I, Chap. II, § 71.

The cardinal principle, therefore, of absolute idealism in regard to the problem of evil is *Perfectionism*: that the universe is perfect as it is, since the evil is necessary for morality; and that the evil, therefore, cannot be eradicated.

In examining the arguments which idealism uses to prove this, we find that they fall into four classes: the psychological, ethical, metaphysical, and theological.

First, as to the psychological argument, some idealists find that there is, as they put it, a "craving for pain;" that such a thing as the "enjoyment of pain" may exist. Now outside of some pathological institution it would seem totally impossible to find anyone who really *craves* pain. Those who have ever had any experience with suffering realize the absurdity of such a suggestion. A person in agony with sciatica, neuritis, or even that common woe, toothache, will hardly say that he is enjoying it.

However, Professor Hocking notes that early man "knew how the frenzy of religious ecstasy made mutilation not only endurable but even necessary to give grist to the exhilaration that stormed within him. . . . Inhabitants of Greenland and Labrador do not leave their difficult countries, though they might; and seamen return to the hardships of the sea with an unbreakable attachment which is no mere habit."⁴ He refers to James's essay, "Is Life Worth Living?" in which James shows that "sufferings do not . . . abate the love of life; they seem to give it a keener zest."⁵ It has been suggested also that children seem to delight in certain painful acts, such as running pins into themselves. Moreover, most of us have met that strange variety of invalid who "enjoys poor health."

⁴ W. E. Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 220.

⁵ William James, *The Will to Believe*, p. 47.

How then can we explain these cases except by the assumption of a craving for pain? I think Professor Hocking puts us on the right track when he says that we long for "reality" and we find this in pain. This shows that it is not the pain which we crave, but that the pain is only a means to an end. In other words, pain is not valuable in itself. Early man considered mutilation a necessary part of religion, just as certain primitive sects, as, for instance, the Druids, thought human sacrifice necessary. The point is not that they themselves enjoyed the suffering, but that they thought such action pleasing to their gods.

As to the Labradorians and the Greenlanders, there seem to be several elements in their case. First of all, there is the tremendous tie of one's native land, the country where one was born and one's ancestors have lived. Secondly, although, as we have seen, Professor Hocking says this attachment is "no mere habit,"⁶ habit seems to play an important part. The Greenlanders always have lived there; any other country would seem strange and uncomfortable, just as visiting in a palace is uncomfortable to some of us, because it is unaccustomed. It is not that anyone prefers hardships, but rather that what are luxuries to some, to others, particularly to those to whom they are new, are actually discomforts. This applies also to the seamen. In a terrific storm at sea a certain sailor said to his comrade, "Say, Bill, ain't we lucky not to be on shore. Think how the shingles must be flying on a night like this!"

Finally, for all these cases there is the love of the atmosphere of adventure and of excitement. This is by no means the same as the enjoyment of pain. When we analyze it, we find it to be quite the opposite. The lover of danger hopes that in the course of his wanderings or his difficulties he will have some thrilling experience, that

⁶ See above, p. 59.

romance is lying in wait for him, with a rôle for him to play, perhaps that of hero.

With children it is not the self-inflicted pain which they enjoy; it is the pride in their own bravery and self-control which they like. So with the invalid who delights in being ill. It is the gifts, the sympathy, particularly, the attention of his friends, that he craves.

All these examples, therefore, show that there are values which are so dear to us that we are willing to endure pain to get them, perhaps even to sacrifice life itself for them, and these ends can range from devotion to a cause, like that of the Waldensians, whom James cites, to the admiration or attention craved by the plain egoist. Whether one can join all these values together under the name of "reality" and say that is what we crave, is a very different question, and one which would involve much metaphysical discussion.

The question would yet remain, whether pain would still be necessary in the world as a *means*. This brings us to what might be called the ethical argument and the one which is perhaps the most popular. According to this, pain and also the other forms of evil are necessary in the constitution of the universe, since without them we could not become virtuous. We need to struggle, and hence we must have something which resists us to provide a hostile environment. This we find to be evil, and we see that evil comes to have a value, since it is indispensable to morality, to prevent moral atrophy. Also, we are told that we get a certain solidarity from fighting evil. The common burden binds men together, as we see in any time of calamity, as, for instance, the Halifax disaster or the wreck of the Titanic. Eradicate evil as a force which must be fought and you will at the same time destroy the very good which you are trying to bring to victory. For virtue and evil are indissolubly joined together, in that it is only in the fight against evil that virtue exists.

But why does the idealist anticipate moral atrophy if evil were finally eradicated and therefore the struggle? We do not say that a man who has no craving for drink is "morally atrophied" or is devoid of morality in comparison to the man who has to fight to overcome his natural desires. We may admire the latter's will power, but we should hesitate to say that he is more highly developed mentally and spiritually.

In this war we have found among the gallant men and women of the Allies and from our own country that certain virtues have been heightened — courage, chivalry, high-mindedness, self-sacrifice, and a host of others. Shall we hope for a perpetuation of war on this account? No; because the qualities which we admire in these men and women spring not from war, which is in itself evil, but from the very fact that they are fighting against war for the purpose of bettering the world.

The fact that good may, and often does, come out of evil at the present state of world development does not prove that evil is therefore a necessary element in the universe for all time. As Professor Perry says, "Circumstances that press life forward will be left behind, if these circumstances are not themselves good."⁷

This argument is really derived from the more important Hegelian doctrine of the perfection of the whole, which forms the metaphysical argument. The universe, as we have seen, is a totality and is *perfect as it is*. This does not mean that it is a Utopia, but that it is perfect because of the evil in it. Destroy evil — not the individual evils, but evil itself — and you would have an imperfect universe, because you would lose all positive values as well. As we look at facts in their severality, we see misery and wickedness, but when we take the attitude of the whole, the "beyond-good-and-evil standpoint," we no longer see these facts blindly, but with an

⁷ R. B. Perry, *The Moral Economy*, p. 26.

understanding of their value and their meaning in relation to the whole. "Hence," says Royce, "the deepest assertion of idealism is not that above all the evil powers in the world there is at work some good power mightier than they, but rather that through all the powers, good and evil, and in them all, dwells the higher spirit that does not so much create as constitute them what they are, and so include them all."⁸

This is the religious attitude, but it is an attitude which prevents "morality from being meaningless," since it includes the latter with its struggle as essential. Evil, therefore, becomes an incident in the whole, and the individual who has taken the attitude of the whole is able to "transmute it."

Of course, the obvious objection to this is that the result of an evil-plus-good mixture, as this transmutation would have to be, cannot be called *good*, in our use of the term, without equivocation,⁹ any more than a cat which is part Persian and part plain cat can be classed as a Persian cat.

But there is another side to this theory of evil as an incident. "Memory," says one idealist, "puts a frame about evil and changes it" — "*Hæc olim meminisse juvabit*" — but as one of the poets quaintly remarks, "Perhaps it may not be pleasant a bit." Memory has not put a frame about the Spanish Inquisition, or the massacre of St. Bartholomew, or the sinking of the *Lusitania*, and changed them. There are things in the history of the world which stand out as simple horrors over which men will always shudder as they recall them.

The trouble is that the idealist, in looking at the history of the world, because of his premise of the absolute unity, has to attempt a justification of such deeds. As Professor Hocking puts it, "One must even be able to look

⁸ Josiah Royce, *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, p. 335.

⁹ R. B. Perry, *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, pp. 180-183.

backward without a shudder.”¹⁰ In other words, he must find not only a scientific explanation of the facts, but a purpose behind these facts.

This brings us to the theological arguments: We are told that there are two kinds of evil in the world, that which we can help and therefore which we must fight — “our job” — and that which we cannot help, which is “God’s job.” This would seem to be an aid to us in looking at history and also in facing life, until we reflect that the whole point hinges on the nice line of distinction between “our job” and “God’s job.” How are we to decide between the two varieties? This would soon prove a dangerous way of shifting responsibility.

Evil in the last resort, we are told, drives the mind to God. It is the “weapon which God uses to drive us to Himself;” because God understands evil, and if we come to see evil through the mind of God, we find it changes its character. To the ordinary theist, to say nothing of the philosophers of other schools, such a statement appears little short of blasphemous. What a conception of God that leaves in one’s mind! One is involuntarily reminded of that delightful sailor minister, Father Taylor, who said to a certain preacher, “Your God is my Devil.” “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him” does not tally with the conception of a God who invented the agonies of the world as a particularly clever instrument of torture to drive human beings to Him.

Again, how about the terrible suffering among dumb animals? How is that to be explained?

Let us hope that Xenophanes is not right in his explanation of the derivation of the conception of God.

¹⁰ W. E. Hocking, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

II

Realism is a comparative stranger in the philosophic world and cannot boast of so famous a lineage as idealism. We have been told by some that realism is the direct descendant of English empiricism; but in this country, at least, it is more closely connected on the metaphysical and epistemological sides with the radical empiricism urged by William James. To give an adequate presentation of its technical doctrines or of the differences between the English and American realists would be impossible for us, since we must spend our time on its moral and religious side; but we should remember that realism, in contrast to the monism of idealism, believes the universe is pluralistic, and that it is plastic and hence "perfectible," rather than the ordered externalizing of the absolute Mind which is perfect.

Realists, unlike idealists, have as yet given little of their attention to the problems of the spirit, with the exception in America of R. B. Perry. They have confined themselves to a "scientific review of the universe." As a matter of fact, Professor Perry's moral and religious philosophy seems a direct descendant of William James's pragmatism. We find the same burning dissatisfaction with things as they are, the sympathy for the tragedy in the world, and the optimistic faith and enthusiastic determination that the universe can be bettered through human action.

For the realist religion is not a different point of view from that of morality. It is the consummation of the latter; it is a religion for the "tough-minded," as James would say, not a panacea to lull one to rest, or a stoical resignation to fate, but a call to the pioneering spirit to action. Perhaps it is this very characteristic of neo-realism which makes it so alluring to the younger students, especially to the youth of such a time as the present.

The cardinal moral doctrine of realism, as we have seen, is meliorism, or the theory that the world can be made better; that the evil can be eliminated. How then does realism seek to prove that this is possible?

What would seem to be realism's most important argument is derived, as is that of idealism, from its metaphysics. It is a pluralistic theory of the universe; we are not dealing with a "block universe;" hence, not all the elements or parts are valuable. Evil is not the condition of virtue; it does not partake of the same essence. It is possible, therefore, to eliminate the parts which are valueless without completely destroying our scheme, as would happen to monism. We can quite ruthlessly set to work to destroy the evil in the universe without feeling that we are interfering with the Absolute or upsetting the universe.

Secondly, realism insists that evil is not indispensable to virtue; that we must distinguish carefully between good and evil and not confuse the two and make good equivocal. As we have said, the realist admits that under present conditions good may come out of evil, but he emphatically denies that this fact in any way changes the character of evil, or that the two are therefore necessarily indissoluble. "It would be as reasonable . . . to argue that because a man may be lifted from the mire, therefore mire is essentially that from which a man may be lifted, and hence, a condition of the higher life."¹¹

Again, the realist has said that we must separate the two forms of knowledge — theory and belief — in order that they may work amicably together. "Theory should enlighten belief and belief strengthen theory."¹² Faith, he tells us, is the especial domain of religion. Now the realist finds that this faith in the perfection of the universe is necessary as a working hypothesis. It is necessary for life.

¹¹ R. B. Perry, *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, p. 247.

¹² R. B. Perry, *op. cit.*

This is strengthened by psychological facts. Can you ever make an army fight by trying to convince the men that they never can win? It is psychologically impossible. Our army officials knew this and they begged the people at home to write more encouraging letters. Virgil knew this: "*Possunt quia posse videntur.*"

Again, it is impossible to fight adequately if one takes too friendly an attitude toward one's opponent. After all, the fight against evil is not a tennis game, which merely gives us exercise and in which we are grateful to have a friend who will play opposite us. It is a grim business, in which we are fighting not a fellow human being, but a deadly force.

The realist feels that the only justification of his fight is that he is trying to make conditions better for those who come after, that is, helping to better the world. As Professor Dickinson Miller says of the heroes in the war, "They are not facing agony for the sake of facing it, but solely in order that other lives may be spared the agony that they bear."¹³

Again, the realist has infinite faith in the plasticity of his environment. The "cosmological proof [of moral idealism] lies in the moral fruitfulness and plasticity of nature."¹⁴ It believes, with pragmatism, that "through the knowledge that is power, and guided by his desire and hope of better things, man may conquer nature and subdue the insurrection of evil."¹⁵

But does the realist find any justification for this faith that nature may be transformed? I think that he can point to scientific and moral progress. No one, I think, would deny the importance of the scientific achievements, especially in the past one hundred years. But we are told by certain of the idealists that there really is no such

¹³ Dickinson Miller, *The Problem of Evil in the Present State of the World*, *Anglican Theological Review*, Vol. I, No. 1.

¹⁴ R. B. Perry, *The Moral Economy*, p. 252.

¹⁵ R. B. Perry, *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, p. 268.

thing as progress. Life has simply become more complicated. The cave-man lived up to his ideals just as well, since they were easier, as we do to ours. The standards have changed, but not mankind. Even granting this much, however, if the same percentage, or a smaller, even approximated the higher ideals, the world would be just so much the better. It is true that few persons live up to the highest ideals of today; but few belong to the cave-man age, and the average is obviously better. A hundred years ago a boy was hanged in London for breaking into a candy shop, and another boy was hanged in the square at Aberdeen, by order of the Duke, for stealing a sheep.

Again, who makes the standards? Are they arbitrary rules imposed from without? Has the individual nothing to do with the shaping of these standards? To the realist it seems that these standards belong to the individual, are just as much a part of his evolution as is his ability to stand erect. The very fact that he has better standards to which he is trying to live up shows his improvement.

During the war the pessimists were all most eager to point out that civilization was "going under" and that we had "slipped back." But was there ever a greater example of moral force than when nations joined together to destroy the idea that ruthless strength is the greatest aim, that the weak should be exterminated, and that war is a necessary and desirable thing? When men have given their lives not for gain or conquest but that the ideals of freedom, democracy, and humanity might live, I think we can safely say that we have progressed somewhat.

But the idealist objects to all this in that it is quantitative. The realist, he argues, thinks that evil is something at which we can keep nibbling until finally it is all gone; whereas, it is a quality; it is of the essence of the universe, and can never be eliminated, especially in this piecemeal fashion.

Now it is quite true that the realist does look at evil quantitatively. He is saved from the qualitative dilemma by his pluralistic universe. He has no trouble in getting rid of the evil, because it is not of the same essence as good. When he has finally succeeded in conquering an individual evil, he has eliminated just that much evil from the world. He does not have to reflect with Bosanquet, that "the stuff of which evil is made is one with the stuff of which good is made;"¹⁶ that he really has not touched the roots of the matter, and that it will manifest itself again.

But there is another objection to realism's attitude: "Why so hot, little man?" we are asked. Religion is something other than grubbing. We must turn away from the "gospel of service," from mere morality, which Bosanquet tells us is "fashionless," and look at the world *sub specie æternitatis*. This attitude of realism keeps us tied down to the fight; it prevents us from becoming serene. Now there is just a grain of truth in this criticism, namely, that service must not become mechanical, if it is to be valuable; but I think the realist would agree to this quite as readily as the idealist.

Professor Hocking tells us the act of giving a cup of cold water is not in itself religious. It is only when the cup of cold water is given "in His name." In this connection it is interesting to note that in Matthew 25, in the description of the Last Judgment, the King says to the blessed ones who are to inherit the kingdom, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," without any idea of the necessity of its being done "in His name." Whereas, in Matthew 7 we find, "Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. . . . Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty

¹⁶ Bernard Bosanquet, *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 215.

works ? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Finally, we are told that we should not want a world without evil in it; it would be too placid, too colorless. Such a world, according to Professor Hocking, "might provide a type of happiness bovine or angelic, but certainly not human."¹⁷ James's famous Chautauqua description has been cited by Bosanquet¹⁸ and by Professor Hoernlé,¹⁹ who try to prove to us that one of the most famous of meliorists has gone back on his own theory.

But why was the Chautauqua community so unbearable to James ? The whole point is that under present conditions such a community is smug and unreal; it is out of touch with the tragedy of the world *as it is*. No person in his right mind really prefers dirt, squalor, "battle, murder, and sudden death" to beauty, freedom, and peace. He may be, and if he is a meliorist he must be, happier now fighting the former than placidly enjoying the latter, but this is only because he has a guilty sense if he is high-minded; he knows that he is a "slacker," if he is not helping to put more of the valuable things into the world, or helping others to reach them, or rooting up that which chokes them. Those who are doing the real fighting against evil — social workers, doctors, nurses, missionaries — are all upheld by their faith that they are contributing their part, however small, to the improvement of the world and the betterment of their fellowmen. They probably are improved by their struggle, too, but that is not their main purpose in life.

Of course, it is impossible to speculate on what the world would be like without evil. We have been presented with all varieties of pictures, from the harps-crowns-golden-streets theories to those of socialistic com-

¹⁷ W. E. Hocking, *Human Nature and Its Remaking*, p. 217.

¹⁸ Bernard Bosanquet, *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*, pp. 332 ff.

¹⁹ R. F. A. Hoernlé, *op. cit.*

munities, according to the type of the imagination and the beliefs of the narrators. It is equally foolish, at the present state of the world, to argue as to what will be left to do when the world shall have been made perfect. The meliorist does not seek to switch away evil suddenly by a wave of a magic wand, as the idealist seems to think he means, and to have people of just the same development as the present transported to a "Golden Age," an earthly paradise existence;²⁰ rather, he believes that perfection is something which must be won through ages of labor and the united efforts of mankind.

If, on the other hand, evil is the "valuable" possession which the idealist insists, the logical thing would be to give everyone as much of it as possible and so provide every opportunity for improvement. While it may be said that this providing of evil can safely be left to the universe, would it not be still better to assist the universe? "Double, double, toil and trouble." A doctor trying to cure a man who would have been a cripple might well pause, on idealistic principles, to consider whether the man might not make more of himself if he were left to suffer. The realist, who would be trying simply to alleviate suffering, would not be troubled by any such nice point. For the idealist, the benevolent, altruistic thing for one to do would be to go about not "doing good," but making it as hard as possible for his neighbor, who, of course, would reciprocate quickly, so that there might be enough trouble for the improvement of all.

"It would be natural, but still perverse," says Professor Hocking, "to infer from this psychological truth [that we do not desire a world free from evil] the desirableness of preserving or courting or importing a degree of evil . . . [but] no war can act as such a remedy unless it is *just*; and no war is just unless it is inevitable."²¹ In

²⁰ Bernard Bosanquet, *Some Suggestions in Ethics*, pp. 93 ff.

²¹ W. E. Hocking, *Human Nature and Its Remaking*, p. 217. (*Italics mine.*)

other words, Professor Hocking would have us believe that evil can be divided into two classes: the good evil and the bad evil! Instead of helping, this merely complicates matters, by leading us into equivocation.

III

Such then, are our two theories, roughly sketched. To what conclusion can we come regarding what they offer us? Let us first see what is the outcome of idealism's theory. Having found that the world is perfect because of the evil in it, there are two courses open to the idealist: The first is to adopt a *laissez faire* attitude; to ignore evil. The second is to fight, even though there is no hope of winning, because it brings out the best in us. The former is the more dangerous, but is perhaps more consistent with the idealist's theory of the universe, and avoids the paradox of fighting whole-heartedly against what one knows cannot be destroyed. This type of idealism has a great deal in common with mysticism and is almost oriental in its attitude. Having gained the knowledge that evil is necessary for the universe, we become more than critics and become serene. We arrive at that stage of which the hymn tells us:

“Content to let the world go by,
To know no gain nor loss.”

Professor Hocking expresses this standpoint when he says: “It [reality] must yield us the idea which unites what we most deeply desire with what is.”²² Now when we say that we are in danger of one of two results: Either we must overlook facts as they are, or we have got to content ourselves with low standards. We must either wear rose-colored glasses as we look out on the blackness of the world, or we must be very easily satisfied. We have confused the actual with the ideal.

²² W. E. Hocking, *Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 436.

Again, we find that we are to overcome evil by ignoring it, by "working out the good by over-attention to it and under-attention to its opposite;"²³ or, as Bosanquet — who, however, belongs more to the second group of idealists — says: "The secret of overcoming it [evil] is to feel that it is overcome and to treat it practically as a conquered thing."²⁴ This is a sort of inspired Christian Science. Just think you have cured your disease, and, presto! it is accomplished. This type of idealist seems to forget that there is such a thing as a divine unrest. Serenity is not enough as a *summum bonum*, and one may wonder whether this peaceful state of mind may not be merely the result of a phlegmatic temperament and a disregard of one's neighbor's woes. Dr. Walton in his delightful little book, *Why Worry?*, tells us that when we see any accident or misfortune, we should always say to ourselves, "Never touched me!" This type of idealist seems to adopt this motto.

Bosanquet and his followers best represent the second type of idealist. "It is part of the paradox of our finite-infinite being," he says, "that we are bound to maintain the combat against evil, and no doubt in a great degree against pain, not merely without anticipating, but even without whole-heartedly desiring, their entire abolition in every possible shape with all their occasions and accessories."²⁵ Or again: "Another prejudice," he tells us, "is that justice, the equal dealing with individuals, is an ultimate law of things. Plainly it is not so."²⁶

Evil, we are told, is like the dust which we sweep away one day only to have it return the next — "there must needs be offences."

Now we cannot but admire the courage which keeps these men striving against the impossible, like Tantalus

²³ W. E. Hocking, *Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 176.

²⁴ Bernard Bosanquet, *Some Suggestions in Ethics*, p. 104.

²⁵ Bernard Bosanquet, *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 179.

²⁶ Bernard Bosanquet, *Some Suggestions in Ethics*, p. 117.

or Sisyphus, or King Canute when he ordered the sea to be lashed with whips.

But why must we fight ? " The only question worth asking and answering in this matter is, What kind of a life, and under what conditions, is fundamentally most worth while as enabling us to make the most of ourselves — life in this actual world of ours, with its suffering and evil, or life, as the meliorist's fancy paints it, in a world without either ? " ²⁷

The world, therefore, becomes a sort of moral gymnasium, with evil as the indestructible punching bag for the development of our moral muscles. It is not that my purpose is to do my share in improving the world, but that the world exists for the purpose of improving ME. Now there is no more dangerous, more subtle, form of egoism than just this. We can see it in that poem of T. E. Brown called " Pain: "

" The man that hath great griefs I pity not;
 'Tis something to be great
 In anywise, and hint the larger state
 Though but in shadow of a shade, God wot! " ²⁸

And we think of Milton's

" Fame, . . . that last infirmity of noble mind."

Strangely enough, the person who consciously aims at the improvement of himself as an exclusive end usually fails. The whole value of " self-realization " depends on what is meant by " self " and " realization." In itself, the term is nothing but an empty shell which can be loaded according to the desire of its creator.

But both forms of idealists tell us that their view of the perfection of the universe is taken from a " beyond-good-and-evil standpoint." Phrases like this and " God as moral and a-moral," and countless other such, may

²⁷ R. F. A. Hoernlé, *op. cit.*

²⁸ Quoted by Bernard Bosanquet, *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 161.

have a meaning for mystics, but for the ordinary mortal they smack of Bacon's *Idols of the Forum* and of equivocation. For good and evil we have actual "sense-data," as Kant would say, and therefore they are real, and we can argue about them; but no human being can honestly know what "beyond good and evil" means; it exists only in that No Man's Land of the imagination where dwell the Purple Cow and the Dodo Bird, and an argument concerning it would be just as valuable as it would about the other two. When the idealist retires to this nebulous region, it is quite impossible to argue with him; but his superior manner towards the "stupidity" ²⁹ of his opponents is extremely irritating, and we are strongly reminded of Aristotle's *μεγαλόψυχος*.³⁰

Idealism, in short, leaves us with a God which we as moral beings find it difficult to worship, and with a universe in which we must, through mystical experience, rise to a "beyond-good-and-evil standpoint" if we are to attain peace of mind or if we are to continue the struggle. Its greatest faults are that it would tend either to indifference — if we are to ignore evil in the "transmutation" process — or egoism, if we are to use the evil to benefit ourselves, and that the natural esoteric quality of its religious experience leads it to be undemocratic.

What has realism to offer us? To be sure, realism, unlike idealism, is not a complete system. It is still in its constructive stage; it is blazing its trail. But this much I think we can say: First, realism gives us a universe in which man may strive hopefully. It scorns the use of mystical experience as a way of escape from the evil around us. It saves the heart of humanity from despair. It recognizes and emphasizes individualism — the power of the individual mind acting on the environ-

²⁹ Bernard Bosanquet, *Some Suggestions in Ethics*, p. 179.

³⁰ Nicomachean Ethics, Book IV, Chap. 3, p. 22: "ὁ μὲν γὰρ μεγαλόψυχος δικαίως (δοξάζει καταφρονεῖ γὰρ ἀληθῶς) οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ τυγχόντες."

ment. As the carpenter said to James: "There is very little difference between one man and another, but what little there is *is very important*;"³¹ and realism believes that this difference is good for the world. We need the varied ideas and efforts of all these individuals.

Again, realism is democratic. It does not hold that the right attitude toward the world is open only to those who have had or can have the mystical experience. It is open to all who are willing to fight "the beautiful fight," and it holds out to them, through faith, the prophetic vision of victory.

Secondly, it gives a moral God, instead of the Absolute of idealism who remains "above the contrasts of good and evil;"³² and it insists on a religious dualism, God being a power other than ourselves, not a comprehensive totality.

Professor Perry's definitions of God seem rather vague and unsatisfactory: "God is neither an entity nor an ideal, but always a relation of entity to ideal."³³ Or, again: "My God is my world practically recognized in respect of its fundamental or ultimate attitude to my ideals. In this sense then, conveyed by this term *attitude*, my God will invariably possess the characters of personality."³⁴

James has perhaps best expressed the melioristic idea of God. "First it is essential," he says, "that God be conceived as the deepest power in the universe; and second, he must be conceived under the form of a mental personality . . . a power not ourselves then, which not only makes for righteousness, but means it, and which recognizes us."³⁵

³¹ William James, *The Will to Believe*, pp. 256, 257.

³² W. E. Hocking, *Meaning of God in Human Experience*, p. 332.

³³ R. B. Perry, *The Approach to Philosophy*, p. 87.

³⁴ R. B. Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

³⁵ William James, *The Will to Believe*, p. 122.

Such an idea of God has been recently popularized through H. G. Wells's *God the Invisible King*. This God, who is striving against evil — or, as Mr. Wells has it, that fights for “the great attainment,” which is “the conquest of death,”³⁶ is a God who works — “My father worketh hitherto and I work.” Man becomes the co-worker with God in the enterprise of transforming nature. He meets God in the field of human endeavor, rather than when he has retired to the beyond-good-and-evil region.

But is this enough for religion? Professor Hoernlé tells us that Perry's religion with its “zeal for progress in human welfare, for rendering service to the cause of reform, for fighting against evil in all its guises, is clearly something without which religion would be poor and ineffective.” But this is not religion, because it is only a “cosmology and ethics, welded together from a biological point of view”;³⁷ it ignores mysticism.

Now mysticism should be recognized as a variety of religious experience, if one is to have religious toleration; and realism, if it is true to its ideals of democracy and individuality, will not seek to exclude the mystics; but for the same reason, realism finds it hard to tolerate statements claiming that mysticism is “the intensest and purest form of religion,” or that mystical experience is “the most characteristic and revealing variety of all [religious] experience.”³⁸

Let us have all the light which the mystics can bring to us, but let us protest when they insist that theirs is the only true light, or when they try to impose their experience on their less fortunate brothers. The term “religion” should be broad enough to include all varieties of religious experience — and who shall say which the “key-note” is?

³⁶ H. G. Wells, *God the Invisible King*, p. 99. (Quoted by R. B. Perry, *The Conflict of Ideals*, p. 329.)

³⁷ R. F. A. Hoernlé, *op. cit.*

³⁸ R. F. A. Hoernlé, *op. cit.*

For realism, religion is the consummation of morality; the lifting of service into the light of a great ideal, into fellowship with God with whom we become co-workers. It is a way of life which appeals to those who wish to "play a man's part and fulfil a man's destiny," but it adds to this struggle the vision of hope, the light of victory, the faith in the unconquerable power of good.

It is said that Leibnitz thought he had invented a "universal characteristic" which he hoped would bring a solution of all problems and an end to all disputes. "If controversies were to arise," he says, "there would be no more need of disputation than between two accountants, for it would suffice to take their pens in their hands and to sit down to their desks and to say to each other (with a friend as witness, if they like) 'Let us calculate.'"³⁹

Unfortunately, this happy day has not yet dawned, and realism and idealism cannot yet calculate on the problem of evil in this mechanical way. They can only theorize from experience, and wait. For after all, realism and idealism are two states of mind, and only time can prove which is right. Meanwhile, the realist, in his belief that the elimination of evil from the world is not a forlorn hope, proposes to struggle onward towards his ideal, with a faith and "a determination that through enlightened action things shall in time come to be what they should be."

³⁹ Quoted by Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic*, Chap. V.